



United States
Environmental Protection
Agency

February 2005
EPA530-F-05-002
www.epa.gov/osw

Hazardous Waste SW-846 Process Streamlined

Action

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is allowing more flexibility in the use of alternative methods outside of those listed in EPA publication SW-846, *Test Methods for Evaluating Solid Waste, Physical/Chemical Methods*. This document is OSW's official compendium of analytical and sampling methods that have been evaluated and approved for use in complying with RCRA regulations.

This rule clarifies the difference between SW-846 methods that are required and those that are guidance methods in the regulations. In addition, some required uses of SW-846 methods remain regulated in situations where a particular procedure is the only one capable of properly measuring for sampling and analysis. This is known as a method-defined parameter. The Agency also is finalizing Update IIIB to the Third Edition of SW-846, and removing unnecessarily required uses of Chapter Nine, "Sampling Plan." In addition, this final rule is amending Sections 7.3.3 and 7.3.4 of SW-846 Chapter Seven to withdraw the cyanide and sulfide reactivity guidance and the rule removes the required uses of reactive cyanide and sulfide methods and threshold levels from conditional delistings.

Background

SW-846 was first published in 1980 to support requirements for testing hazardous and nonhazardous waste. At the time, SW-846 was intended to serve as a guidance manual of generally appropriate and reliable analytical methods for testing and monitoring waste. Some of the RCRA regulations required the use of SW-846 methods in general, and therefore all of the publication had to be incorporated by reference at 40 CFR 260.11(a). EPA has determined that some of the required uses of SW-846 are not necessary. In addition, members of the regulated community requested the opportunity to use other reliable methods to comply with hazardous waste regulations. On May 8, 1998, EPA also proposed to remove certain required uses of SW-846 methods, and to allow more flexibility in test method selection.

Subsequently, on October 30, 2002 (67 FR 66251-66301), the Agency proposed to amend the hazardous and nonhazardous solid waste regulations for testing and monitoring activities from the RCRA regulations.

For More Information

This fact sheet and other information related to the Methods Innovation Rule are available on the Internet at <http://www.epa.gov/epaoswer/hazwaste/test/mir.htm>.